Message Text

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INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SSM-03 EB-07 COME-00 L-03 TRSE-00 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 H-01 SS-15 NSC-05 SP-02 AID-05 STR-04 /075 W

-----032150Z 057561 /73

R 031447Z JAN 77 FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO TO SECSTATE WASHDC 188 INFO AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS AMEMBASSY JIDDA AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

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E.O. 11652: GDS TAGS: ETRD PFOR

SUBJECT: ARAB BOYCOTT OF ISRAEL

REF: 76 STATE 308412

1. PER REFTEL, EMBOFF DISCUSSED IN GENERAL TERMS DISCRIMI-NATION AND POSITIVE CERTIFICATION QUESTIONS JANUARY 3 WITH ARAB LEAGUE ECONOMIC DEPT. DIRECTOR DR. ALY M. NAZIF (WHO IS EGYPTIAN CITIZEN). NAZIF WAS RECEPTIVE TO OPENING CHANNEL OF COMMUNICATION AND EXPRESSED WILLINGNESS TO RECEIVE USG VIEWS ON SUBJECT. WE STRESSED LIMITED SCOPE FOR ACTION OF LEAGUE SECRETARIAT, HOWEVER, NOTING THAT IT BASICALLY IS RECIPIENT OF FORMAL BOYCOTT OFFICE DECISIONS FROM DAMASCUS FOR ONWARD TRANSMITTAL TO COUNCIL OF MINISTERS. ONLY SECRE-TARIAT ACTION FEASIBLE IS PREPARATION OF COMMENT TO ACCOMPANY DOCUMENT BEING FORWARDED TO MINISTERIAL LEVEL. WHILE AWARE OF SIGNIFICANCE OF DISCRIMINATION AND CERTIFICATION QUESTIONS IN US-ARAB TRADE, NAZIF FURTHER PROFESSED HIMSELF UNFAMILIAR WITH DETAILS OF BOYCOTT RULES AND PRACTICES; HE SUGGESTED LATER MEETING WITH EMBOFF AFTER BONING UP ON SUBJECT: CONFIDENTIAL

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2. COMMENT: DESPITE RESERVATIONS ON ROLE OF ARAB LEAGUE EXPRESSED BY NAZIF, BELIEVE CHANNEL IN CERTAIN INSTANCES COULD BE USEFUL IN CLARIFICATION OF BOYCOTT RULES AND THEIR IMPLEMENTATION WITH RESPECT TO US FIRMS. MOST ADVANTAGEOUS USE OF ARAB LEAGUE CONTACT PROBABLY WOULD BE APPROACHES ON SPECIFIC, WELL-DOCUMENTATED PROBLEM CASES. LEAGUE OFFICIALS INDICATED

HE WOULD BE WILLING TAKE UP QUESTIONS ON SUCH CASES WITH
SECGEN RIAD FOR POSSIBLE QUERY OF DAMASCUS BOYCOTT OFFICE
IF SECGEN DEEMS APPROPRIATE.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X

Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am Channel Indicators: n/a

Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED

Concepts: INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION, COMMUNICATION LINES, BOYCOTTS

Control Number: n/a

Copy: SINGLE Sent Date: 03-Jan-1977 12:00:00 am Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am

Decaption Note:

Disposition Action: RELEASED Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW

Disposition Date: 22 May 2009 Disposition Event: Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977CAIRO00040
Document Source: CORE

Document Unique ID: 00

Drafter: n/a Enclosure: n/a Executive Order: GS

Errors: N/A **Expiration:**

Film Number: D770002-0373

Format: TEL From: CAIRO

Handling Restrictions: n/a

Image Path:

ISecure: 1

Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770186/aaaacxaj.tel

Line Count: 66 Litigation Code IDs: Litigation Codes:

Litigation History: Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM

Message ID: 90e4e4dd-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc

Office: ACTION NEA

Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a

Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a

Reference: 76 STĂTE 308412

Retention: 0 Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED Review Content Flags:

Review Date: 03-Dec-2004 12:00:00 am

Review Event: Review Exemptions: n/a **Review Media Identifier:** Review Release Date: n/a Review Release Event: n/a **Review Transfer Date:** Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a

SAS ID: 3674757 Secure: OPEN Status: NATIVE

Subject: ARAB BOYCOTT OF ISRAEL

TAGS: ETRD, PFOR, US, EG, IS, (NAZIF, ALY M)

To: STATE Type: TE

vdkvgwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/90e4e4dd-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc

Review Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009

Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009